

Contact: Joanne Gallivan  
(301) 496-3583

Faye Wong  
(770) 488-5966

## **SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES ARE NOT CONTROLLING THEIR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS**

**WASHINGTON, DC** -- New data from the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) show that more than half of people with type 2 diabetes in the United States have unacceptably high blood sugar levels, putting them at increased risk for serious diabetes-related complications. To address this critical health problem, the National Diabetes Education Program, a joint program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is reinforcing its *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* awareness campaign with new messages and materials. The campaign encourages the 16 million Americans with diabetes to take steps now to control their blood sugar levels.

"Fewer than half (44.6 percent) of type 2 diabetes patients in this national study had hemoglobin A1c levels of less than 7.0 percent. This is the level the American Diabetes Association (ADA) considers to be the goal for people with diabetes," said Dr. Charles M. Clark, Jr., Chairman of the National Diabetes Education Program's Steering Committee. The hemoglobin A1c test, considered the best test for measuring blood sugar control, is a simple lab test that measures a person's average blood sugar level over the 3-month period prior to the test. "Even more disturbing is that 37 percent of people with type 2 diabetes had hemoglobin A1c values greater than 8.0 percent. This is the level at which the ADA recommends that patients work with their health care providers to intensify their treatment to improve blood sugar levels," noted Dr. Clark.

The NHANES III survey also found that more African American women (50 percent) and Mexican American men (45 percent) had hemoglobin A1c levels above 8.0 percent compared with other ethnic groups. This finding is significant because minority populations are

**-more-**

disproportionately affected by diabetes and they experience higher rates of the complications associated with the disease.

"The NHANES data demonstrate that many patients are in poor control," said Dr. Clark. "We must take action because controlling blood sugar levels now is the key to reducing the risk of diabetes complications such as blindness, kidney failure, and lower limb amputations." Scientific studies provide compelling evidence that maintaining blood sugar levels at less than 7.0 percent, as measured by the hemoglobin A1c test, may significantly reduce the risk of these diabetes complications.

The National Diabetes Education Program's *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign recommends that people with diabetes eat healthy foods in the right amounts, get regular physical activity, take prescribed medications, test their blood sugar levels regularly, and get a hemoglobin A1c test at least twice a year. "By following these steps, people with diabetes will not only reduce their risk of developing the devastating complications associated with diabetes, but they also can feel better, have more energy, and ultimately enjoy a better quality of life," said Dr. Clark.

Television, radio and print public service advertisements for the *Control Your Diabetes. For Life.* campaign specifically targets the many groups affected by diabetes: Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and American Indians. The campaign also is a key strategy of the President's Initiative on Race, which is designed to improve the health status of America's racial and ethnic populations.

To help people with diabetes control their disease, the National Diabetes Education Program is offering a free booklet called *Tips for Feeling Better and Staying Healthy*. The booklet provides patients with a plan to control their blood sugar and questions to ask their health care providers about their diabetes care. This booklet and other diabetes education materials are available for patients, their family members, and health care providers by calling 1-800-438-5383 or by visiting the program's web sites at <http://ndep.nih.gov> or <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/>.